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From Encouraging Notes to Baby Bottles, Cedarville Supports Miami Valley Women's Center

by Clem Boyd

They may be behind the scenes, but their efforts are making a noticeable impact on the lives of the preborn, their mothers, and those who serve them.

Abi Chavies '18 is a team leader, along with Kayla (Paney) Daniels '16, for Cedarville's ministry to the Miami Valley Women's Center (MVWC) in Xenia, Ohio. Every Wednesday at 5:30 p.m., the Cedarville team of four to five students travels to the Xenia office, a half-hour after closing time. They clean the office and make it an inviting place for women who are seeking pregnancy counseling. But each time of service begins with the Lord.

"We pray for 20 minutes for the center and for the ladies who volunteer at the center," Chavies said. "We thank God that women have a place like this to go to."

The team has also written notes of encouragement to volunteers. "What an extra-special labor of love," commented Debbie Gebhart, Director of the Xenia office, in an email to Vicky Hines, Cedarville's Global Outreach Ministry Coordinator.

"I cried when I came in and saw [the notes]. Several of the volunteers were truly encouraged and blessed by this kind act of service toward us. The words weren't just nice but were spoken to each one personally as a message they needed to hear. You all are doing a great job and should be very proud of your students," Gebhart concluded.

The cleaning and prayer ministry continues a relationship between Cedarville and MVWC that started in 1996. "When a prominent educational institution takes a stand for the cause of life and partners with a local pregnancy resource center, it makes a valuable statement to the community," noted Tiffany Seifman, MVWC's Executive Director.

In addition to Chavies' team, Cedarville students also mentor middle school students in Xenia and Cedarville who are part of MVWC's STARS program. STARS stands for Self-Respect, Truth, Accountability, Responsibility, and Success and is one of three abstinence education outreaches that promotes abstinence, character development, and healthy relationships.

Cedarville also has a long-standing financial partnership with MVWC. The

University has underwritten the Gala fundraising event for a number of years and students have promoted the Baby Bottle Campaign, raising funds for client

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care, from pregnancy testing supplies to educational materials to baby supplies.

"Last August, students collected more than \$17,000 for the MVWC during their annual Fall Bible Conference," Seifman said. "These funds allow the MVWC to provide pregnancy testing, limited ultrasound, and options counseling for women who are considering an abortion. Clients receive information on adoption, parenting, and abortion so they can make an informed decision. Those who have experienced an abortion can receive healing through the Abortion Recovery Ministry (ARM). In addition, the MVWC offers a number of services for both men and women from all walks of life, including parenting classes, discipleship, or Bible study."

Seifman continued, "Without great partnerships, we cannot spread the word about the life-affirming work at the Miami Valley Women's Center, or raise financial support and build a solid reputation on our own. We are grateful to Cedarville University!"

Serving MVWC with her team has changed Chavies. "The individuals who serve with me are incredible examples of what it means to humbly serve Christ and others," she said.

"We are all very different people — different majors, different backgrounds, different personalities. But one cause can unite you. We're there to spread the Gospel and help the center do that in the community. We've become a family working toward the same goal."

Clem Boyd is Managing Editor of Cedarville Magazine.

